

Saturday Magazine.

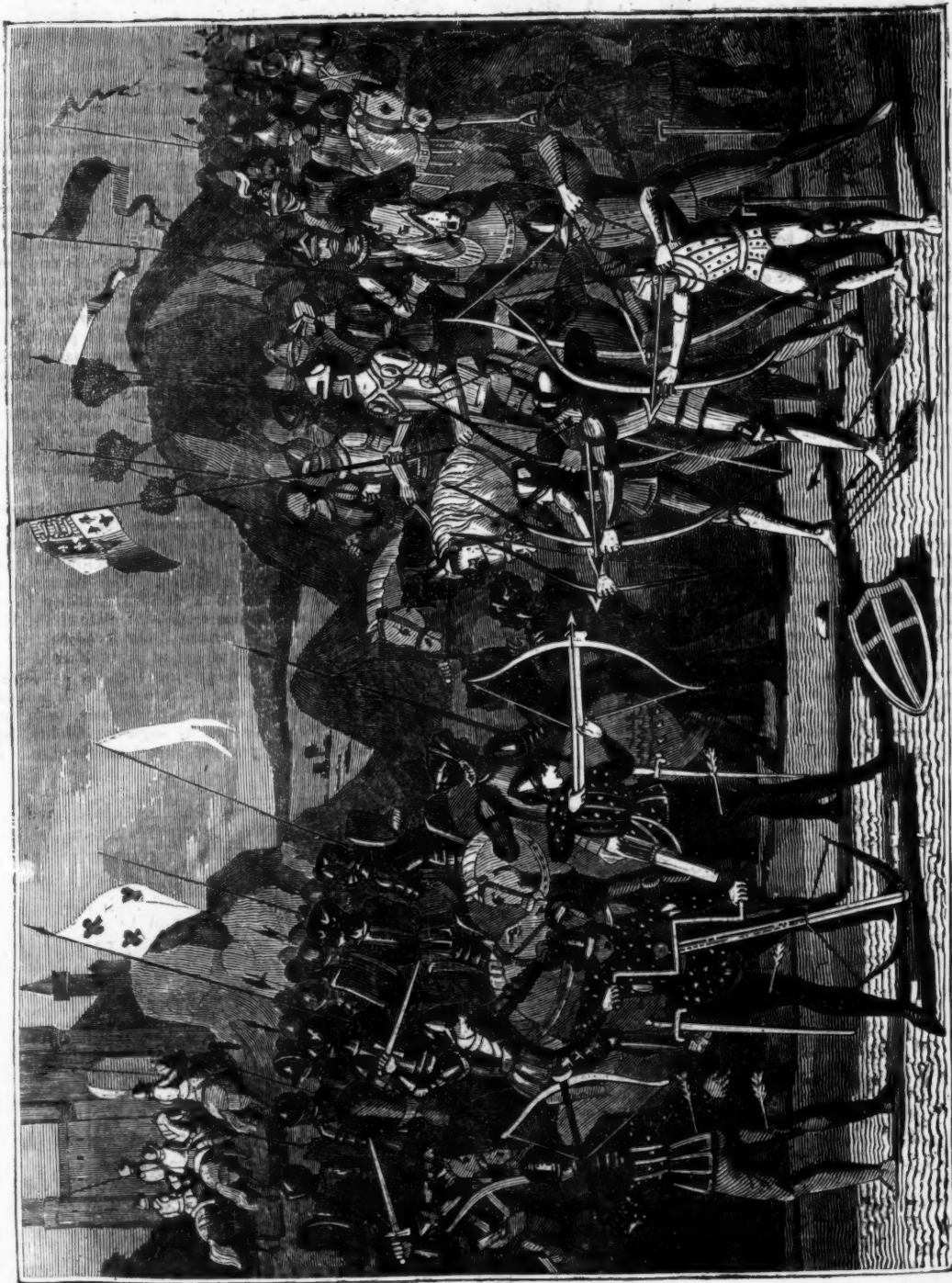
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ANCIENT PICTURE OF THE BATTLE OF CRESSY.

THE BATTLE OF CRESSY. No. I.

CRESSY is a name applied to several villages and districts in different parts of France. The subject of our present notice is a village situated in the department of the Somme, about ten miles to the north of the town of Abbeville. Before the revolution, it was comprised within the province of Lower Picardy; and more anciently still, it formed a part of what was called the county of Ponthieu,—from which circumstance it is sometimes called Crécy en Ponthieu, to distinguish it from other places of the same name. The plains in its neighbourhood are fertile; and the inhabitants of the village carry on a little trade in the different articles of agricultural produce. But altogether, it is quite an insignificant place, and its name would in all probability never have been brought under the notice of the world were it not for the famous battle which was fought in its neighbourhood, nearly five hundred years ago.

The victory of Cressy is perhaps the most famous that was ever won by the English, throughout the whole of those long and arduous wars which our early monarchs carried on against France, either in asserting their claims to the throne of that country, or in endeavouring to extend the dominions which they held within the limits of its territory. "It is a general persuasion among Englishmen," says Mr. Sharon Turner, "that the reign of Edward the Third is the most illustrious period of their ancient annals;" and the popular belief on that point, as the same writer remarks, may be attributed to the victories of Cressy and Poitiers. The recollection of the splendid success which had attended the English arms on the day when the first of them was gained, served often on subsequent occasions to animate our forefathers with the confidence of victory when opposed to a force far superior to their own.

We have an excellent account of this celebrated battle in the *Chronicles* of Sir John Froissart, who was himself living, though but of tender years, when it took place, and who derived his information upon the subject from the mouths of those who had borne an active part in the fight. This "Herodotus of a barbarous age," as the poet Gray called him, was born in 1337, at the French city of Valenciennes, which then formed a part of the county of Hainault; and after having been priest, canon, and treasurer of the collegiate church of Chimay, he died about 1401, leaving behind him a collection of *Chronicles* of his own time, which had been compiled from the most authentic sources, and which have afforded to those living in subsequent ages a succession of "moving pictures," as Gray describes them, "of the life, actions, manners, and thoughts of their ancestors, done in strong though simple colours." We have also a description in poetry, or rather in rhyme, of the "Bataille of Cresseay, under the fortunes and valour of King Edward the Third, of that name, and his sonne Edward, the Prince of Wales, named the Black," by Charles Aleyne, who flourished under Charles the Second.

The battle of Cressy was fought on Saturday, the 26th of August, 1346, in the course of the war which our King Edward the Third had commenced against France in 1336, when he set up his claim to the throne of that country in opposition to Philip of Valois, who was already seated upon it by the title of Philip the Sixth. It was not till the campaign of 1346, that any important blow was struck; but in that year, Edward advanced into the heart of France, and carried fire and sword up to the gates of Paris.

It does not appear that Edward at this time seriously contemplated the reduction of Paris: his

plan seems rather to have embraced certain objects, less brilliant perhaps, but scarcely less important, namely, a strong diversion in favour of the Earl of Derby, who was fighting in the south of France, and the capture of Calais by a rapid countermarch. "But Philip chose his ground with so much skill, and threw so many obstacles in the way, that to execute the latter of these projects, as had been originally proposed, proved impracticable." Wherever he marched, Edward found the bridges broken down on the rivers, and fords and defiles so strictly guarded, that it was not without severe fighting that he once or twice forced a passage; and learning that Philip was at Paris collecting his forces, and taking measures as well to intercept the retreat of the English as to check their progress, he resolved, if possible, to turn back, and march towards the coast. Deceiving Philip by an attempt to advance, he altered his route towards the river Somme; and having approached within a short distance of it, rested for a while, in order to gain information as to where he could best effect a passage. The river was wide and deep, and the King of France had ordered all the bridges and fords to be broken down and well guarded, to prevent the English from crossing; "for he was resolved to force them to fight, when he should see the most favourable opportunity, or else to starve them."

In this situation, the King of England felt embarrassed; his marshals scoured the neighbouring country with a strong detachment, and tried three several bridges in succession, but were repulsed at all by their defenders, and returned in the evening to the king with the disheartening intelligence of their failure. The same night, Philip, who had followed Edward, vexed at having been deluded by him, arrived within a short distance of the English, at the head of 100,000 men. Edward was "very pensive," and on the following morning quitted his position, which, two hours afterwards, was occupied by the French, who found there "provisions of all sorts,—meat on the spits, bread and pastry in the ovens; wine in barrels, and even some tables ready spread; for the English had left it in very great haste." It happened that Edward had with him some prisoners which had been taken in the neighbourhood, and summoning a council, he ordered them to be brought before him. He then most courteously asked "if any of them knew a ford below Abbeville, where he and his army could pass without danger; and added, "Whoever will show us such a ford shall have his liberty and that of any twenty of his fellow-soldiers whom he may request." There was among them "a common fellow," named Gobin Agace, who answered the king, and said, "Sir, I promise you, under peril of my life, that I will conduct you to such a place where you and your whole army may pass the river Somme without any risk. There are certain fordable places where you may pass twelve men a-breast twice in the day, and not have water above your knees; but when the tide is in the river, is full and deep, and no one can cross it: when the tide is out, the water is so low that it may be passed on horseback or on foot without danger. The bottom of this ford is very hard, of gravel and white stones, over which all your carriages may safely pass, and from thence is called Blanchetaque. You must, therefore, set out early, so as to be at the ford before sunrise." "Friend," replied the king, "if I find what thou hast just said to be true, I will give thee and all thy companions their liberty; and I will besides make thee a present of a hundred nobles." And thereupon, Edward gave orders for every one to be ready to march at the first sound of his trumpet.

"The King of England did not sleep much that night,—but rising at midnight, ordered his trumpet to sound." The army marched, and reached the ford before sunrise; but there they found 12,000 men drawn up on the banks of the river to guard and defend it, under the orders of Sir Godemar du Fay, a great baron of Normandy. "The King of England, however," says the old chronicler, "did not for this, give up his intention of crossing: but as soon as the tide was sufficiently gone out, he ordered his marshals to dash into the water in the names of God and St. George. The most doughty and the best mounted leaped in first; and in the river the engagement began: many on both sides were unhorsed into the water: there were some knights and squires from Artois and Picardy in the pay of Sir Godemar, who, in hopes of preferment and to acquire honour, had posted themselves at this ford, and who were as fond of tilting in the water as upon dry land." When the English gained the land they had to force their way through a narrow pass near which the French were drawn up in battle-array. They had been much annoyed as they came out of the water by the Genoese cross-bowmen, "who did them much mischief;" but, on the other hand, the English archers shot so well together, that they forced the men-at-arms to give way. Many gallant feats of arms, as Froissart says, were performed on each side; but in the end, the valour and constancy of the English surmounted the opposition; and after the king and his lords had crossed, the French did not long keep in the order they were in, but "ran off for the fastest." Edward himself "gave thanks to God, and began his march in the same order as he had done before,"—taking care of course to liberate and reward his guide. His escape had been narrow indeed, for scarcely had the bulk of his troops crossed, when some of the light-horse of Philip's advance came up to the river, and slew several of the English who had been late in crossing.

When Philip learned that the passage had been effected, he halted and asked his marshals what was to be done: they answered, "you can only cross the river by the bridge of Abbeville, for the tide is now in at Blanchetaque." Accordingly, he returned and took up his quarters at Abbeville, while Edward proceeded to the village of Crécy, having previously sent his marshals forward to clear the road to Crotois on the sea-coast. Edward fixed his quarters, with the whole of his army, at Crécy, on the afternoon of Friday, the 25th of August; and he then learned that the King of France was following in order to give him battle. Finding a position in the neighbourhood,—a position well adapted to the amount and nature of his forces, he said to his people, as Froissart narrates, "Let us post ourselves here; for we will not go further before we have seen our enemies. I have good reason to wait for them on this spot; as I am now upon the lawful inheritance of my lady-mother*, and which was given her as her marriage-portion; and I am resolved to defend it against my adversary, Philippe de Valois."

On Friday, then, the English encamped on the plain of Cressy; and the soldiers set about repairing and furbishing their armour. The king gave a supper in the evening to his earls and barons; there was "good cheer" at this repast, and when the nobles

had withdrawn after it, Edward retired into his oratory, and "falling on his knees before the altar, prayed to God that if he should combat his enemies on the morrow, he might come off with honour." On the following morning he rose early, and having performed his religious offices, proceeded to draw up his army in the rear of the village, on the slope of a gentle eminence, its flanks being secured partly by wood, partly by intrenchments, and its front covered by a broken and difficult country. The troops were formed into three lines. The first, consisting of 800 men-at-arms, 2000 archers, and 1000 Welshmen, was commanded by the Prince of Wales, who became afterwards so famous as the "Black Prince," and who was then but a youth of fifteen years of age; under him were the Earls of Warwick, Oxford, and Harcourt, the Lords Chandos, Holland, and other noblemen, all among the flower of England's chivalry. They advanced in regular order to their ground, "each lord under his banner and pennon, and in the centre of his men." The second division, of 800 men-at-arms and 1200 archers, obeyed the orders of the Earls of Arundel and Northampton, with whom were the Lords Willoughby, Basset, Roos, and Sir Lewis Tufton; while the third, consisting of 700 men-at-arms and 1200 archers, was commanded by King Edward himself, who kept it to be used as emergencies should arise, and as the poet says, "like a pilot stood behind to steer."

When the king had thus drawn up his army, he mounted a small palfrey, and with his two marshals on each side of him, and a white wand in his hand, he rode gently at a foot-pace through all the ranks, encouraging and entreating the army that they would guard his honour, and defend his right:—"He spoke this so sweetly," says the chronicler, "and with such a cheerful countenance, that all who had been dispirited, were directly comforted by seeing and hearing him." This duty being performed, and it being now ten o'clock, the king bethought him of securing the bodily energies of his troops; so he ordered all to "eat heartily, and drink a glass after." They ate and drank at their ease; and having "packed up the pots, barrels, &c., in the carts," returned to their battalions, and seated themselves on the ground, placing their helmets and bows before them, that they might be the fresher when their enemies should arrive.

The King of France, in the meanwhile, had been lodged at Abbeville, where he had given a feast to his princes and chief lords, on the evening of Friday the 25th. He quitted the town early on the following morning, at the head of 120,000 men, and marching towards Crécy, sent out a party of nobles to reconnoitre Edward's position. "The English plainly perceived they were come to reconnoitre them: however, they took no notice of it, but suffered them to return unmolested." When they went back, King Philip said, "My lords, what news?" but the lords looked at each other, we are told, without opening their mouths, for neither chose to speak first. At last the king addressed himself to the Lord Moyne, who was attached to the King of Bohemia, and who had performed very many gallant deeds, "so that he was esteemed one of the most valiant knights in Christendom." The Lord Moyne then said, "Sir, I will speak, since it pleases you to order me, but under the correction of my companions. We have advanced far enough to reconnoitre your enemies. Know, then, that they are drawn up in three battalions, and are waiting for you. I would advise, for my part, (submitting, however, to better counsel,) that you halt your army here, and quarter there for the night: for before the rear shall come up, and the army be pro-

* Edward claimed the crown of France in right of his mother, Isabella, the daughter of King Philip the Fourth; she had been excluded from the throne after the death of her three brothers, by virtue of the Salic law which had been passed in 1316, to prevent the succession of females to the French crown. Edward admitted her disqualification, but insisted that it was personal only, and did not extend to himself.

perly drawn out, it will be very late; your men will be tired, and in disorder, whilst they will find your enemies fresh, and properly arrayed. On the morrow you may draw up your army more at your ease, and may reconnoitre at leisure on what part it will be most advantageous to begin the attack; for, be assured," added this sagacious knight, "they will wait for you."

The king, approving of the advice, commanded "that it should be so done;" and his marshals thereupon rode to the rear and front, crying out, "halt, banners, in the name of God and St. Denis!" Those that were in the front did as they were commanded, but those behind said they would not halt until they were as forward as the front. When the front perceived the rear pressing on, they pushed forward; neither the king nor the marshals could stop them, and thus all marched on without order till they came in sight of the English. The foremost ranks then suddenly fell back in great disorder, much alarming those in the rear, who thought they had been fighting; there was then space and room enough for them to have passed forward, which some did, but which others, who "remained shy," declined doing. "There is no man," says Froissart, "unless he had been present, that can imagine or describe truly the confusion of that day, especially the bad management and disorder of the French, whose troops were out of number." To crown the whole, the roads between Abbeville and Crécy were all covered with the common people of the country, who, when they were come within "three leagues" of their enemies, drew their swords, bawling out, "kill! kill!" and with them were many great lords that were "eager to make show of their courage."

Having thus conducted the two armies into the presence of one another, and explained the dispositions made by the leaders, we shall leave them for awhile, and in a future number give our readers a description of the battle itself and its results.

QUARTETS are executed by four instruments; a first violin, a second violin, an alto, and a violoncello. An intelligent woman said, that when she heard a quartet of Haydn's, she fancied herself present at the conversation of four agreeable persons. She thought that the first violin had the air of an eloquent man of genius, of middle age, who supported a conversation, the subject of which he had suggested. In the second violin, she recognised a friend of the first, who sought by all possible means to display him to advantage, seldom thought of himself, and kept up the conversation, rather by assenting to what was said by the others, than by advancing any ideas of his own. The alto, was a grave, learned, and sententious man. He supported the discourse of the first violin by laconic maxims, striking for their truth. The bass, was a worthy old lady, rather inclined to chatter, who said nothing of much consequence, and yet was always desiring to put in a word. But she gave an additional grace to the conversation, and while she was talking, the other interlocutors had time to breathe. It was, however, evident, that she had a secret inclination for the alto, which she preferred to the other instruments.—*Life of Haydn.*

I HAVE often had occasion to remark the fortitude with which women sustain the most overwhelming reverses of fortune. Those disasters which break down the spirit of a man, and prostrate him in the dust, seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex, and give such intrepidity and elevation to their character, that at times it approaches to sublimity. Nothing can be more touching than to behold a soft and tender female, who had been all weakness and dependance, and alive to every trivial roughness, while treading the prosperous paths of life, suddenly rising in mental force to be the comforter and supporter of her husband under misfortune, and abiding with unshrinking firmness, the bitterest blasts of adversity.—WASHINGTON IRVING.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

II.

SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING FAIRIES AND SUPER-NATURAL AGENCY.

Such airy beings awe th' untutored swain,
Nor thou, though learned, his homelier thoughts neglect.
COLLINS.

IN common with other countries, particularly the Highlands of Scotland, a traditional belief exists amongst the Irish peasantry in those romantic little sprites denominated Fairies; and it is wonderful, considering their being creatures of imagination, that the superstitions respecting them should have remained so much confined, and so very similar. Whether the fairy mythology of Ireland has been derived from the East, and transmitted thence through the medium of Spain, or has, as some believe, a northern origin, it is of little import to inquire, particularly as nothing more than conjecture can now be advanced on the subject. It is, however, evident, that the present fairies of Ireland, if not Gothic creations, were at least modelled in the same school and age with the elves of northern Europe.

There is an odd mixture of the ridiculous and the sublime in the prevalent notions respecting such beings. The feelings and passions of mortality, and immaterial bodies, being superstitiously ascribed to them, fairies are supposed to possess both the power and the inclination to revenge an affront. The motive of fear, which induces some savage nations to worship the Devil, prompts the vulgar in Ireland to term fairies "good people," and in Scotland "guid folk;" nor is it uncommon to see a rustic, before drinking, spill a small part of his draught upon the ground, as a complimentary libation to the fairies. Such as use the word *fairy*, are often corrected in a whisper, which caution arises from conceiving that these beings are invisibly present, and the appellation is considered offensive, as denoting an insignificant object. Thus, hoping to deceive by flattery, the maxim most attended to in the intercourse with these "little great ones," is that "civility begets civility." The same system of fear and flattery seems to have existed amongst the Irish, even towards animals, in the time of Elizabeth; for Camden tells us, "they take unto them wolves, to be their *godsibs* (gossips,) whom they term *Chari Christ*, praying for them, and wishing them well, and so they are not afraid to be hurt by them."

The circular intrenchments and barrows, known by the name of Danish forts, in Ireland, are pointed out as the abode of fairy communities, and to disturb their habitation, in other words, to dig, or plough up, a *rath*, or fort, whose construction the superstitious natives ascribe to the labour and ingenuity of the "good people," is considered as unlucky, and entailing some severe disaster on the violator and his kindred. An industrious peasant, who purchased a farm in the neighbourhood of Mallow from a near relative of mine, commenced his improvements by building upon it a good stone house, together with a lime-kiln. Soon after, he waited on the proprietor to state "the trouble he was come to by reason of the old fort, the fairies not approving of his having placed the lime-kiln so near their dwelling;—he had lost his sow with nine *bonniveens* (sucking-pigs,) his horse fell into a quarry and was killed, and three of his sheep died, 'all through the means of the fairies.'" Though the lime-kiln had cost him five guineas, he declared he would never burn another stone in it,

but take it down, without delay, and build one away from the fort, saying, he was wrong in putting that kiln in the way of the "good people," who were thus obliged to go out of their usual track. The back door of his house unfortunately also faced the same fort, but this offence was obviated by almost closing it up, leaving only a small hole at the top, to allow the good people free passage, should they require it. In these raths, fairies are represented as holding their festive meetings, and entering into all the fantastic and wanton mirth that music and glittering banquets are capable of inspiring. A fairy chieftain, of much local celebrity, named Knop, is supposed to hold his court in a rath, on the road-side between Cork and Youghall, where often travellers, unacquainted with the country, have been led astray by the appearance of lights, and by alluring sounds proceeding from within; but when

The village cock gave note of day,
Up sprang in haste the airy throng;
The word went round, "away! away!"
The night is short, the way is long—

and the delicious viands change into carrion. The crystal goblets become rugged pebbles, and the whole furniture of the feast undergoes a similar metamorphosis.

An eddy of dust, raised by the wind, is attributed to the fairies journeying from one of their haunts to another; on perceiving which, the peasant will obsequiously doff his hat, muttering, "God speed ye, God speed ye, gentlemen;" and returns it to his head, with the remark, "good manners are no burden," as an apology for the motive, which he is ashamed to acknowledge. Should he, however, instead of such friendly greeting, repeat any short prayer, or devoutly cross himself, using a religious response, the fairy journey is interrupted, and if any mortals are in their train, the charm by which they were detained is broken, and they are restored to human society. On these occasions, the production of a black-hafted knife is considered as extremely potent in dissolving the spell. This weapon is believed to be effective not only against fairy incantation, but also against any supernatural being; and accounts of many twilight recontres between shadowy forms and mortals are related, to establish its power, gouts of blood or jelly being found in the morning on the spot where the vision had appeared.

The most romantic dells are also pointed out as scenes of fairy resort, and distinguished by the term *gentle places*; beetling linen by the side of a rocky stream that murmurs through an unfrequented glen, is represented as a favourite, or rather common female fairy occupation, where they chant wild and pathetic melodies, beating time with their beetles. The herbs and plants, with which such glens abound, are considered as under fairy influence, and are collected, with many ceremonies, for charms, by cunning old women, termed *Fairy Doctors*, or, sometimes, from their professed knowledge of surgery, *Bone Setters*. A confidence in superstitious quackery exists so strongly amongst the lower orders in Ireland, that many instances are known to me where patients have been carried a distance of several miles to a *Bone Setter*, to whom a fee was given; when they might have received, without removal, and free of expense, every attendance from the most skillful surgeons. "I would not, if all the doctors in Ireland told me so, treat the poor sufferer thus," is the pre-fatory sentence used by these "wise women." "What do doctors know about sick people?—but take the herbs which I shall give you, bury them at sunset in the north-east corner of the fort-field, and when

you return, tie a thread three times round the left-hand upper post of the sick person's bed, and let it remain there for nine nights,—&c.

Fairies are represented as exceedingly diminutive in their stature, having an arch and malicious expression of countenance, and generally habited in green, with large scarlet caps; hence the beautiful plant, *Digitalis purpurea*, is named "Fairy Cap" by the vulgar, from the supposed resemblance of its bells to this part of fairy dress. To the same plant, many rustic superstitions are attached, particularly its salutation of supernatural beings, by bending its long stalks in token of recognition.

Old and solitary thorns, in common with the digitalis, are regarded with reverence by the peasantry, and considered as sacred to the revels of these eccentric little sprites, whose vengeance follows their removal. Any antique implement casually discovered by the labourer is referred to the fairies, and supposed to have been dropped or forgotten by them; small and oddly-shaped tobacco pipes, frequently turned up by the spade or the plough, the finder instantly destroys, to avert the evil agency of their former spiritual owners. Amongst those remains may be noticed the flint arrow-heads, said to be sportively shot at cattle, by the fairies; and in compliance with the popular superstition termed, even by antiquarians, "elf arrows."

The fairies are believed to visit the farm-houses in their district on particular nights, and the embers are collected, the hearth swept, and a vessel of water placed for their use before the family retire to rest. But these dubious divinities seem to preside more especially over cattle, corn, fruits, and agricultural objects. Milking the cows, upsetting the dairy pans, and disarranging whatever may have been carefully placed in order, are amongst their mischievous proceedings. CLURICAUNE, or LEPREHAUNE, is the name given to the Irish PUCK. The character of this goblin is a compound of that of the Scotch BROWNIE and the English ROBIN GOOD FELLOW. He is depicted (for engraved portraits of the Irish Leprehaune are in existence) as a small and withered old man, completely equipped in the costume of a cobbler, and employed in repairing a shoe. A paragraph recently appeared in a Kilkenny paper stating, that a labourer, returning home in the dusk of the evening, discovered a Leprehaune at work, from whom he bore away the shoe which he was mending; as a proof of the veracity of his story, it was further stated, that the shoe lay for the inspection of the curious at the newspaper office. The most prominent feature in the vulgar creed respecting the Leprehaune is, his being the possessor of a purse, supposed to be, like that of Fortunatus, inexhaustible; and many persons, who have surprised one of these fairies occupied in shoe-making, have endeavoured to compel him to deliver it; this he has ingeniously avoided, averting the eye of his antagonist by some stratagem, when he disappears, which it seems he has not the power of doing as long as any person's gaze is fixed upon him.

When a child appears delicate, or a young woman consumptive, the conclusion is, that they are carried off to be made a playmate or nurse to the young fairies, and that a substitute, resembling the person taken away, is deposited in their place, which gradually declines, and ultimately dies. The inhuman means used by ignorant parents to discover if an unhealthy child be their offspring or a changeling, (the name given to the illusory image,) is, placing the child, undressed, on the road-side, where it is suffered to lie a considerable time exposed to cold,

After such ceremony, they conclude a natural disorder has caused the symptoms of decay; and the child is then treated with more tenderness, from an idea, that had it been possessed by a fairy, that spirit would not have brooked such indignity, but made its escape. Paralytic affections are attributed to the same agency, whence the term "fairy struck;" and the same cruel treatment is observed towards aged persons thus afflicted.

A curious spirit, and one I believe peculiar to Ireland, is the BANSHEE, or WHITE FAIRY, sometimes called SHE FROGH, or the House Fairy. The derivation of both these names appears to me obvious, from the credulous personification, that of a small and shrivelled old woman with long white hair, supposed to be peculiarly attached to ancient houses or families, and to announce the approaching dissolution of any of the members by mournful lamentations. This fairy attendant is considered as highly honourable; and in part of an elegy on one of the knights of Kerry, still extant, the family Banshee is introduced as deploring, with wailing accents, the knight's impending fate. Every trader at Dingle who hears the strain becomes alarmed lest it should forbode his own death; but the bard assures them, with an air of humorous sarcasm, they have no cause for uneasiness, such warning being given only to those of illustrious descent.

Another species of Irish fairy is the PHOOKA, the descriptions given of which are so visionary and undefined, it is impossible to reduce them to detail. The name of many lonely rocks and glens in Ireland declares them sacred to this spirit. In the county Cork there are two castles called Carrig Phooka, or the Phooka's Rock, one near Doneraile, the other not far from Macroom; and in the county Wicklow, the celebrated waterfall of Poula Phooka, or the Phooka's Cavern, is well known.

Notwithstanding the universal belief in fairy influence, the credence given to witchcraft amongst the vulgar Irish is by no means proportionate. Some few instances are historically preserved; but, considering the extent and reputation which witchcraft obtained during the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First, in England, these may be viewed as imported rather than primitive superstitions. The admirable account of Moll White, given in the *Spectator*, presents a collection of the popular notions respecting the sorcery of old women; and those who are inclined to investigate the subject further, may find some hundred volumes written upon it.

The most remarkable Irish witch on record, is Dame Alice Ketyll. Amongst the charges made against her, when examined in 1325, was the sacrificing nine red cocks to her familiar spirit or imp, named Robyn Artysson, "at a stone bridge in a certaine fourre crosse high-way." "Item, that she swept the streets of Kilkenny with besomes between Complin and Courefew, and in sweeping the filth towards the house of William Utlaw her sonne, by way of conjuring, uttered these words:

Unto the house of William, my sonne,
Hie all the wealth of Kilkenny town."

And, amongst "the goods and implements of the said Alice, there was a certain holy wafer cake found having the name of the divell imprinted upon it; there was found also a boxe, and within it an ointment, wherewith she used to besmear or grease a certain piece of wood called coultree, which, being thus anointed, the said Alice, with her complices, could ride and gallop upon the said coultree whithersoever they would, all the world over, through thick and thin, without either hurt or hindrance." These

things, we are told, were notorious, and dame Ketyll, to avoid punishment, escaped to England; but one of her accomplices, Pernill or Parnell, was burned at Kilkenny, who avouched that Alice's son William, "deserved death as well as herself, affirming that he for a year and a day, wore the divell's girdle upon his bare bodie." Kilkenny seems to have been peculiarly fatal to witches. In October, 1578, Cox relates that Sir William Drury, the Lord Deputy, caused thirty-six criminals to be executed there, "one of which was a blackamoor, and two others were witches, and were condemned by the law of nature, for there was no positive law against witchcraft in those days."

Some more recent account of witches is traditionally preserved in Ireland, particularly of Nanny Steer, whose malign glance produced madness, and the malady of many a wretched lunatic, who wandered about the country, was attributed to her baneful influence.

In the Queen's county, a young man, named Rutledge, on the day of his marriage, is said to have become a victim to one of these dreadful looks, from his having neglected to invite Nanny Steer to the wedding—who appeared an unbidden guest, and casting an evil eye on the bridegroom, he immediately became a maniac.

"In no case," says Camden, speaking of Irish superstitions, "must you praise a horse or any other beast, until you say, 'God save him,' or unless you spit upon him. If any harm befall the horse within three dayes after, they seeke him that praised him, that he may mumble the Lord's Prayer in his right eare. They think that there bee some that bewitch their horses with looking upon them, and then they use the help of some old haggas, who, saying a few prayers with a loud voice, make them well again." This belief in the fatal effects of an evil eye is as prevalent at the present day as when Camden wrote; and few, if any, of the lower orders, will speak to or of a child without spitting out, and excusing himself, should a superior be present, with—"Its for good luck sure."—"And God bless the boy, and make a fine man of him." So powerful is this superstition, that even people of education, and above the ordinary rank, are obliged, from policy, to accommodate themselves to it in their intercourse with the peasantry, as few things are considered more dangerous and unfriendly, or are longer remembered, than the omission of such ceremony.

Another vulgar superstition regarding witches is their power of assuming the shape of some insect or animal: the most favourite forms are those of a fly or a hare; under the latter disguise they are supposed to suck the teats of cows, and thus deprive them of their milk, or communicate an injurious effect to it.

Of the following story numberless variations are in circulation amongst the Irish peasantry. A herdsman having wounded a hare which he discovered sucking one of the cows under his care, tracked it to a solitary cabin, when he found an old woman smeared with blood and gasping for breath, extended almost lifeless on the floor, having, it is presumed, recovered her natural shape.

In churning, should not the milk readily become butter, the machinations of some witch are suspected. As a test, the iron coulter of the plough is heated in the fire, and the witch's name solemnly pronounced, with the following charm, on whom this spell is supposed to inflict the most excruciating tortures,—

Come butter, come,
Come butter, come,
Peter stands at the gate
Waiting for a buttered cake,
Come butter, come.

And if the milk has lost its good qualities by means of incantations, it immediately turns to excellent butter.

In the sixteenth century, the same opinion existed in Ireland, somewhat tinged with a relic of Pagan or Pruidical rites, fire being considered, before the introduction of Christianity, the immediate representative of the Deity, and the first of May as peculiarly sacred to these rites, many relics of which may still be discovered.

"They take her for a wicked woman and a witch, whatever she be, that commeth to fetch fire from them on May-day, (neither will they give any fire then, but unto a sicke body, and that with a curse,) for because they thinke the same woman will, the next Summer, steale away all their butter. If they finde a hare amongst their heards of cattell on the said May-day, they kill her, for they suppose shee is some old trot, that would filch away their butter. They are of opinion that their butter, if it be stolen, will soone after bee restored againe, in case they take away some of the thatch that hangeth over the doore of the house, and cast it into the fire."

As in England, a worn horse-shoe nailed on the threshold, or near the entrance of a house, is considered as a security against witchcraft; but this remedy is used only in the better description of cabins.

Second sight, so common in the Highlands, I believe is unknown in the South of Ireland. Story relates a mysterious appearance of stars, accompanied by heavy groans, that preceded the landing of the rival monarchs William and James, seen by "one Mr. Hambleton, of Tollymore, a justice of the peace in his county, and a sober, rational man;" in company with others who were journeying towards Dundalk; adding, "They have a great many tales of this kind in Ireland, and the Inniskilling men tell you of several such things before their battles." I should, however, consider these visions, on account of their northern limits, as derived from Scotland, and not genuine Irish superstitions.

I fear it may be considered that I have dwelt too long upon, and entered too minutely into the notions of the ignorant; but early associations have tempted me to linger over these marvellous relations, and have, perhaps, misled my maturer judgment.

Such fancies are the coinage of the brain,
Which oft rebellious to more sober thought
Will these strange phantoms shape; the idle prate
Of fools and nurses, who in infant minds
Plant such mishapen stuff, the scorn and scoff
Of settled reason and of common sense!

On the whole, from what may be collected, the present state of Irish superstition closely resembles that of England during the age of Elizabeth; a strong proof of the correct measurement of those who have stated a space of two centuries to exist between the relative degree of popular knowledge and civilization attained by the sister kingdom.

[Abridged from CROFTON CROKER'S *Researches in the South of Ireland.*]

As the vine which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and been lifted by it in sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is risted by the thunderbolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils, and bind up its shattered boughs; so is it beautifully ordered by Providence, that woman, who is the mere dependant and ornament of man in his happier hours; should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity; winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart.—WASHINGTON IRVING.

HUMAN CONDUCT.

SHOULD a spirit of superior rank, who is a stranger to human nature, accidentally alight upon the earth, and take a survey of its inhabitants, what would his notions of us be! Would not he think, that we are a species of beings made for quite different ends and purposes than what we really are? Must not he imagine that we were placed in this world to get riches and honours? Would he not think that it was our duty to toil after wealth, and station, and title? Nay, would he not believe we were forbidden poverty by threats of eternal punishment, and enjoined to pursue our pleasures under pain of damnation? He would certainly imagine that we were influenced by a scheme of duties quite opposite to those which are indeed prescribed to us. And truly, accordingly to such an imagination, he must conclude that we are a species of the most obedient creatures in the universe; that we are constant to our duty; and that we keep a steady eye on the end for which we were sent hither.

But how great would be his astonishment, when he learnt that we were beings not designed to exist in this world above three-score and ten years; and that the greatest part of this busy species fall short even of that age! How would he be lost in horror and admiration, when he should know that this set of creatures, who lay out all their endeavours for this life, which scarce deserves the name of existence, when, I say, he should know that this set of creatures are to exist to all eternity in another life, for which they make no preparations? Nothing can be a greater disgrace to reason, than that men, who are persuaded of these two different states of being, should be perpetually employed in providing for a life of three-score and ten years, and neglecting to make provision for that which, after many myriads of years, will be still new, and still beginning; especially when we consider that our endeavours for making ourselves great, or rich, or honourable, or whatever else we place happiness in, may, after all, prove unsuccessful; whereas, if we constantly and sincerely endeavour to make ourselves happy in the other life, we are sure that our endeavours will succeed, and that we shall not be disappointed of our hope.—ADDISON.

THE CROCUS'S SOLILOQUY.

Down in my solitude under the snow,
Where nothing cheering can reach me;
Here, without light to see how to grow,
I'll trust to nature to teach me.

I will not despair, nor be idle, nor frown,
Locked in so gloomy a dwelling;
My leaves shall run up, and my roots shall run down,
While the bud in my bosom is swelling.

Soon as the frost will get out of my bed,
From this cold dungeon to free me,
I will peer up with my little bright head,—
All will be joyful to see me.

Then from my heart my young buds diverge,
As rays of the sun from their focus;
I from the darkness of earth will emerge
A happy and beautiful Crocus!

Gaily array'd in my yellow and green,
When to their view I have risen,
Will they not wonder how one so serene
Came from so dismal a prison?

Many, perhaps, from so simple a flower,
This little lesson may borrow;—
Patient to-day, through its gloomiest hour,
We come out the brighter to-morrow!

BLACKWOOD'S Magazine.

